



Eric Newman <[REDACTED]>

Coin World Column

7 messages

Jeff Reichenberger <[REDACTED]>

Tue, Mar 1, 2011 at 11:30 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Newman,

My name is Jeff Reichenberger. I write the 'Low Relief' column in Coin World. It is the monthly so-called humor column.

I'm writing you to ask permission to mention your name in a forthcoming column. I hope to have it published in the May issue (2nd week) to coincide with your 100th birthday.

I have attached a draft of it for your review. Please let me know your thoughts.

Thank you,
Sincerely,
Jeff

P.S. I asked Cliff Mishler for your email address and he obliged. We are fellow board members of N.O.W. (Numismatists Of Wisconsin)

P.S.S. I have developed a passion for Buffalo Nickels so I have to ask. Is the copper pattern as lovely as I imagine it is?

=



YE OLDE CHOCOLATE SHOP.doc

23K

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
To: [REDACTED]

Thu, Mar 3, 2011 at 2:43 PM

Dear Jeff:

When a newspaper columnist asks permission to use one's name that is humor in which you state you are a specialist. Thank you for asking Ye Olde Almost Centennial Me and sending Almost Centennial Me a copy of you proposed Coin World draft.

I am close to learning to be a chocoholic to appreciate your humor. You asked for suggestions to your suggested text and being a writer I am obligated to do so.

The unique US 1913 Indian Head nickel in copper (content often tested) has a dark copper color and is still in the original flat eight aperture leather holder with celluloid sliders and with snap locked folding covers. In that holder or case all five 1913 Liberty Head nickels were originally housed along with one 1913 normal Type I Indian Head and one 1913 normal Type II Liberty Head nickel when all of them were first shown to numismatists. The case is still in our possession

You may ask me further questions and may edit any of the above if you decide to use any of it.

Eric for Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society

[Quoted text hidden]

Jeff Reichenberger <[REDACTED]>

Thu, Mar 3, 2011 at 7:05 PM

To: eric newman <[REDACTED]>

Dear Eric,

Thank you very much for your approval. I'll let Beth Deisher know you gave the OK. If she approves, it will run in the May 9th issue.

At 50, I find that chocolate and numismatics are two of my finest pleasures, I can imagine at 100 they must be doubly satisfying!

I will make an edit from 'Buffalo' to 'Indian Head'. This will be preemptive, as Beth always catches such things. As a writer I am slowly learning that the accepted terms are not always the proper terms.

Thank you for the description of the nickel - oops! I mean five-cent piece. Are there any color photographs of the coin? (Just for my own curiosity.)

Again, my sincere thanks!

-Jeff

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Thu, 3 Mar 2011 14:43:13 -0500
Subject: Re: Coin World Column
To: [REDACTED]
[Quoted text hidden]
=

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]> Fri, Mar 4, 2011 at 1:10 PM
To: [REDACTED]

Dear Jeff:

I am glad you received my drivel on the 5 cent 1913 copper coin and are correcting some of my comment. I may have made a terrible mistake which needs correction. I am not sure whether the copper piece is a Type I or a Type II. I will have to find that out in my files or find the piece itself unless someone else finds the item written up in a revision of a pattern book, an error book or elsewhere. I will try to have its image taken if you want one as I do not remember an image being published..

If I do not live until the May 5, 2011 publication date I will let you know. Eric

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Dear Eric,

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My source is the Judd Pattern book, 8th edition, and it states that the nickel is a Type II. There is a small black and white photo, but I presume that could be of any 1913 Type II.

I sure appreciate your offer to image the coin, but please do not go through any extra trouble to have a photo taken, I would love it of course, but I'd feel terrible if it became a burdensome project for you. I'd offer to photograph it myself, but with family and work obligations I'd have to make arrangements for a trip to St. Louis at least a month or two in advance.

Jeff

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Fri, 4 Mar 2011 13:10:09 -0500
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[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]> Sat, Mar 5, 2011 at 8:10 PM
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Dear Eric,

Absolutely! I will accept that offer to photograph the coin! I am not a professional at imaging coins by any means, but I do photograph my collection with a digital camera and have had good results. I will endeavor to bring all the stuff I need to set up and create a nice image of the coin.

A good time for me would be Wed. April 27th through Sat. the 30th. If you are available any of those dates, please let me know and we'll make arrangements. If not, I'll find a weekend that will work, whether it's sooner or later.

As we work this out, perhaps phone conversations would work easier.

Thank you!
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Date: Sat, 5 Mar 2011 20:10:37 -0500
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Thank you!
Jeff

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Sat, 5 Mar 2011 20:10:37 -0500
[Quoted text hidden]
=

YE OLDE CHOCOLATE SHOP

Whoa is me, I'm as blue as a 1962 Proof Jefferson Nickel housed in an 'archival quality' collector's album. I have been informed that my local chocolate shop will no longer give out half dollars in change. What a dastardly blow. These fine proprietors loved to make people happy, first with chocolate, and then with a nice Kennedy wagon wheel in your change. "No more", said Mr. Chocolate, and then explained that for the last 15 years he has made a regular special request to his bank to obtain the half dollars. But the bank has put the kibosh on all such requests because it's too much of a hassle for them to get the halves. I felt stupefied melancholy, as a tear rolled down my cheek and entered the crease of my mouth, mingling with the dark chocolate almond cluster that was melting on my tongue.

I love that little chocolate shop, not just for the luscious confections, but for its old-world atmosphere as well. Established in 1890, the building itself - with its small customer counter, glass display cases, tiny checkerboard floor space, and family service are enchanting. The ladies behind the counter wear candy-striped aprons and genuinely like their jobs. In fact, the charm of this place beguiles me so that I would be more than comfortable calling it; '*YE OLDE CHOCOLATE SHOP*'! You heard me correctly, I said; '*YE OLDE*'! That's how good it is!

In order to qualify as '*YE OLDE*', it has to be good – *very good*! It has to be substantive. Has to stand the test of time. '*YE OLDE*' invokes pride, tradition, and charm. Deep human intervention and craftsmanship are traits of '*YE OLDE*' products and establishments, such as, '*YE OLDE BLACKSMITH*', or '*YE OLDE FURNATURE*', '*YE OLDE BAKERY*', or '*YE OLDE PRINT SHOP*', and of course, '*YE OLDE MINT*'. We aren't talking about any plastic nicky-nack silicon ticky-tack throw-a-way junk here. There will never be a '*YE OLDE CEL-PHONE STORE*'!

If you want to use '*YE OLDE*', then you've got to follow some parameters. The very words, '*YE OLDE*', the way it's spelled and the way it looks implies Colonial, and Colonial implies early America, and early America implies good, cool stuff that is well made. So, a good rule would be that you must be established for at least 100 years and produce good, cool stuff. That shouldn't be too much to ask. Of course, any entity that has genuine Colonial roots and is still in operation, such as the U.S. Mint, is allowed to use '*YE OLDE*'. That's only fair. (But take heed U.S. Mint, if you should lose your quality along the way, slack off on ingenuity, or start copying others, you may be stripped of your '*YE OLDE*' status.) Now, since 100 years is the standard for '*YE OLDE*', then perhaps it may be appropriate to add a qualifier to those whose roots reach back to the 18th century. '*SUPER YE OLDE*', or '*WAY YE OLDE*', or '*YE OLDER*'? I'll have to give that some thought.

And what about people? Are there any '*YE OLDE*' people out there? Of course there are! They are known as 'Centenarians'; people who reach the age of 100. Do they qualify to be known as '*YE OLDE*'? Of course they do! They're 100 for goodness sake! They're cool, well made, proud, and most of them are good and charming! And right here in the

numismatic community have reason to celebrate! One of our most distinguished and iconic mentors is becoming a centenarian! Happy Birthday Mr. Eric P. Newman! Like the unique 1913 Buffalo Nickel struck in copper that was last known to be in your possession, you just keep getting better with age. However, the nickel will not meet '*YE OLDE*' standards for another two years. On the other hand, you sir, have reached that lofty milestone! You are an ongoing inspiration to the entire hobby, and you have truly earned the honor and prestige to be known as, '*YE OLDE NUMISMATIST*'!

CONGRATULATIONS!

(And a hardy salute to any other numismatic centenarians who may be out there; wear your '*YE OLDE*' with pride!)



Eric Newman <[REDACTED]>

nickel photos

2 messages

Jeff Reichenberger <[REDACTED]>

Thu, Mar 10, 2011 at 11:07 PM

To: eric newman <[REDACTED]>

Dear Eric,

I just realized that the dates I presented as a possible time to photograph the nickel, are also the same dates as the Central States Convention in Chicago. Maybe those dates won't work because you have plans to attend Central States?? If not, then any day April 27th through the 30th will still work for me if you are able.

I've been thinking of penning an article about the coin to go along with the photos - not a humor column article, but perhaps along the lines of "The forgotten Nickel". Would you be interested in a collaboration on such an article? I know enough has been written about the 1913 Liberty Nickels, but to my knowledge the Indian Head nickels in the group were only talked about as an afterthought. I think a piece that focuses on the Copper Nickel, along with a first time color photograph would be publish-worthy.

-Jeff

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
To: [REDACTED]

Fri, Mar 11, 2011 at 5:34 PM

Dear Jeff:

Thank you for your further suggestions as to the proposed visit to St. Louis. I will not be attending the Central States Convention in Chicago. I think it will be better if you telephone me so we can better come to a mutually convenient solution. My number is [REDACTED] Eric

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

=



Eric Newman <[REDACTED]>

my Reichenberger roots

1 message

Jeff Reichenberger <[REDACTED]>

Wed, Apr 20, 2011 at 7:54 PM

To: eric newman <[REDACTED]>

Hello Eric,

Our conversation today prompted me to ask my father about our origins. Here are the results:

My great grandfather Reichenberger came from the town of Reichenberg, in the Wurzburg district of Bavaria, Germany - in the Black Forest region.

My grandfather Pertmer was Austrian, but was raised in Brez, Trento, Italy near the Austrian border.

Thank you for prompting the interest and your offer to look for numismatic items from these places.

Will talk to you soon,

Jeff

P.S. May I ask, when setting up the photograph of the nickel, will there be an empty table available, or floor space? My copyboard is not very big, 1.5' x 2' or so. I will have plugs, lamps, and all that is otherwise needed.



Eric Newman <[REDACTED]>

(no subject)

1 message

Sun, Apr 24, 2011 at 2:01 PM

to: [REDACTED]

Dear Jeff:

Your 4/19/11 letter was received and read carefully. I thought it best to send you some suggestions so that you may make changes before you arrive so that only important problems can be discussed at that time.

p. 2 line 4 & 5 was published in 2005 The date was in the end notes but is needed here.

p. 2 line 5 remove the comma for clarification

p. 2 para 2 line 7 replace "is" with "seems"

p. 3 end of page. I made no notes about the Indian Head pieces

p. 4 para 1 I think that one of the Indian Head pieces was the Type I without the designer's initial F
What is there now I probably put in later to compare with the copper piece. I imagine that the
original three Indian Head pieces in the case were each different and unique on purpose.

p. 6 last line of first partial para. "doubtful" instead of "erroneous" That softens the blow.

p. 6 red portion. Have no information

p. 7 line 8 Take out "a regular issue"

p. 7 last para I found a memo of mine as to the test of the metal content but not the test report itself

p. 11 second to last line Correct "surly" to "surely" (Damn the spell check if
caused that as it changes the meaning)

I hope this is a little helpful.

As soon as your travel plans are settled please let me know.

Eric



Eric Newman <[REDACTED]>

copy edit - Forgotten Nickel

1 message

Jeff Reichenberger <[REDACTED]>

Wed, May 18, 2011 at 9:45 PM

To: eric newman <[REDACTED]>

Dear Eric.

Good to hear from you today. You sound very busy and that is a good thing. However, I hope you will be able to set aside your projects for a while to celebrate your birthday! Thank you for the commemorative 'In Eric We Trust' \$100 note, I have it on my office bulletin board for inspiration.

I agree with you that the Type II regular issue sentences we discussed should be removed. I have already done it. I simply deleted them. I had some trepidation about them anyway, so I'm glad you said something. The copy is better without them. See below:

The regular issue uncirculated Type II coin was not a problem for anyone to acquire at any time after production began, so adding that coin to the leather case was nothing unusual. But the copper piece is another story with it's own set of questions.

I added the fact that Johnson valued the coin at \$1.00 in the photograph caption.

I'll look forward to getting the rest of your suggestions. It's (Its) ?? good to have an astute copy editor!

All my best,
Jeff



Eric Newman <[REDACTED]>

Fwd: Suggestions for possible changes to final drafy

2 messages

Fri, May 20, 2011 at 2:22 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

Sent: 5/20/2011 1:20:35 P.M. Central Daylight Time

Subj: Fwd: Suggestions for possible changes to final drafy

From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

Sent: 5/19/2011 5:11:58 P.M. Central Daylight Time

Subj: Suggestions for possible changes to final drafy

Dear Jeff :

Since speaking to you I want to summarize my old and some new thoughts.

I think a shorter article for The Numismatist as distinguished from a longer more scholarly booklet done by you is great. Footnotes are not customary for The Numismatist which likes more pictures.

p.1 l. 4 "he and" should be stricken out.

p.2 l. 14 it's should be its

p.5 l. 4 . add at end of line "for each" or "for one"

p. 13 the photos of the Type II nickel are not nickel color but very brown. I will send the coin to you for photography if you cannot correct the color

p. 14 l. 5 should be clarified to read: The Type II nickel struck on a copper planchet

p. 15 l. 9 You previously used a hyphen in Fab- Five but do not use it here. Which is correct?

p. 16 second to last line. "entire piece" seems clumsy suggest using holder

If I can be of further help be free to ask.

Eric

Jeff Reichenberger <[REDACTED]>

Sat, May 21, 2011 at 2:06 PM

To: eric newman <[REDACTED]>

Dear Eric,

Thank you. I've made the changes.

Now that I believe the body copy is finalized, I am going to work on the photographs - you are right that the Type II looks

too brown, while it does have a bit of toning, it is not entirely tinted as it shows in the photo. I don't know exactly why it looks that way, something to do with the lighting perhaps. But I've run across this before and it will be easy to fix to a more natural nickel color on the computer. I don't believe re-photographing it will be necessary.

When I have the photos edited, I will send you copies.

Thank you again,
Jeff

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Fri, 20 May 2011 14:22:03 -0400
Subject: Fwd: Suggestions for possible changes to final drafy
To: [REDACTED]
CC: [REDACTED]
[Quoted text hidden]



Eric Newman <[REDACTED]>

A Forgotten Nickel

2 messages

Jeff Reichenberger <[REDACTED]>

Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 6:59 AM

To: eric newman <[REDACTED]>

Dear Eric,

I've read about your birthday celebration - How wonderful! Congratulations and many more!

Attached is the article with the final edits, including the photographs in finished form. It is currently being formatted for the monograph.

The only thing that may be lacking is an illustration or photo on the first page, which I can add as the process goes forward.

(Perhaps a small shot of the entire group of 8 nickels, which can be easily done. Also, it would be nice to show a photo of you as a young man when you acquired the coins. I would use the photo from the Early Paper Money book jacket with your permission)

In addition, I've completed the shortened version for The Numismatist, and will send it shortly. It is approximately 500 words shorter.

Please let me know what you think.

Thank you!

Jeff

Contact info:

Jeff Reichenberger
P.O.Box 2803
Oshkosh, WI 54903

[REDACTED]

Work phone: [REDACTED] (days)
Home phone: [REDACTED] (eves)
Cell Phone: [REDACTED] (leave message)



A Forgotten Nickel. Final Draft 5-22-11.doc
5306K

To: [REDACTED]

Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 12:40 PM

Dear Jeff:

Thank you for your congratulatory message. I am trying to recover from all the wonderful things that happened to me and my family at the celebratory events..

I am glad to have you are able to use my mug from an old book as I am not at home now to have my wife find another image of me when I was much younger.

Glad you are making such progress on the various texts.

Eric

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

=

A FORGOTTEN NICKEL ...and its companions

By Jeff Reichenberger

INTRODUCTION

As often happens during a research project, one thing leads to another. So it was when I contacted Eric P. Newman about something else entirely, that we began discussing the unique Indian Head Nickel struck in copper that is in the possession of his Numismatic Education Foundation.

Always an afterthought in the great story of the five 1913 Liberty Head Nickels, the three Indian Head Nickels (more commonly referred to as Buffalo Nickels), that accompanied the Liberty Heads in the eight-coin custom made leather case had always intrigued me, and who better to ask questions about them than Newman. We were in agreement that these siblings of the famous 'Fab Five' deserved an article of their own, particularly the unique copper coin.¹ (It is interesting to note that of the 1913 five-cent type coins represented in the leather case, there are 5 known Liberty Heads, there are 11 known Indian Head J-1950 Type I patterns², there are countless Type II regular production mint state Indian Heads, but there is one, and only one known Type II Indian Head Nickel struck in copper.) Since a color photograph had never been taken of the copper coin, we thought it would be nice to have one accompany the narrative. So here, for the first time in full public view, is the unique Buffalo Nickel struck in copper, along with its unusual story.

JAMES EARLE FRASER'S REVERENCE TO NATIVE AMERICANS IS EXPRESSED IN HIS SCULPTURAL ART; INCLUDING THE ICONIC AMERICAN INDIAN HEAD NICKEL. This is the only copper example known*. The coin has developed a dark-toned crust on the fields and crevasses around the devices. This crusting is possibly a product of its environment, the copper reacting to the composition of the cardboard holder over the span of more than 75 years. The strike weakness is a product of, or a combination of, rather tired dies, perhaps improper strike pressure, and a planchet that may have been slightly shy of proper thickness. Weak strikes were not uncommon in the entire series and in the early days of 1913



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(1)

OBVERSE

The color is brown with very dark fields and crusty toning. The strike is soft as can be easily observed above the braid and in the hair and feather detail. LIBERTY appears weak, the upper portions of the letters spreading near the rim and the rim itself thickens there and is rounded entirely. The date and digits are rounded as well.



Copyright 2011 Jeff Reichenberger

(2)

REVERSE

The color of the reverse is brown but somewhat lighter than the obverse, particularly on the back of the bison, with dark crusty fields. The reverse also shows the same characteristics associated with a weakly struck Buffalo nickel. There is lack of detail at the shoulder, on the hind flank, and on the fur of the head and back. The upper two-thirds of the rim is also weak.

*One speaking technically might assert that there are known mint error Buffalo Nickel strikes on 19 mm copper cent planchets. This is true, however, those were struck in error on wrong sized planchets. This specimen was struck on a proper sized copper planchet with probable intent.

†Renaissance... Burdette. Pg. 257.

BACKGROUND

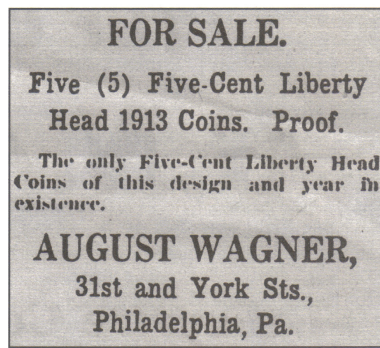
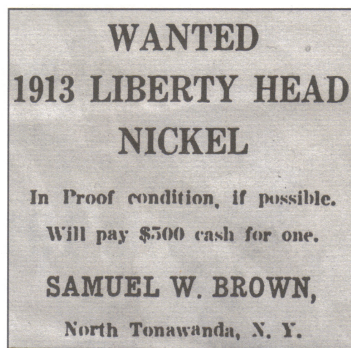
A vast quantity has been written about the history of 1913 Liberty Head Nickels. The recent finding of the Walton specimen in his family holdings brought forth many informative articles. A wonderful book entitled ‘Million Dollar Nickels’, by Paul Montgomery, Mark Borckardt, and Ray Knight was published in 2005. The history is inevitably repeated on each occasion when one of the privately held specimens is up for auction. Insomuch as they are indelibly tied to our Indian Head subjects, we will be brief in rehashing when and how the 1913 Liberty Head Nickels came to be.

Somewhere between mid-November 1912 and mid-February 1913, there were some shenanigans going on at the United States Mint in Philadelphia.³ Within this approximately ninety-day time frame, one or more persons did some die work, activated a coining press, knocked off five Liberty Head Nickels with the date 1913, left not a trace, and walked away clean as a whistle. There is circumstantial evidence pointing to a former mint employee, but nothing concrete to support who did the deed, when it was done, or the purpose for doing it. Speculation abounds, but anyone who may have known the truth in the matter seems long past earthly motivation to do so.

Nothing was known of the existence of the coins until December of 1919, when Samuel W. Brown (aforementioned former mint employee) placed an advertisement in the American Numismatic Association monthly journal, *The Numismatist*, wanting to buy 1913 Liberty Head Nickels, offering \$500 for each. Subsequently, Mr. Brown made available the first public appearance of a 1913 Liberty Head Nickel at the ANA annual convention

held in Chicago in August 1920. B. Max Mehl got into the action and began advertising to buy the nickels as well.⁵ The next significant activity came when a Philadelphia coin and stamp dealer named August Wagner placed ads to sell all five nickels in the December 1923 and January and February 1924 issues of *The Numismatist*.

The coins were reportedly offered as a group for \$2,000. There is nothing specific as to whether the three Indian Head Nickels were included in the sale price, or if the coins were housed in a custom-made case at this time, although it has been suggested they were.⁶ Just whom had the custom leather case made, whether it was Brown, Wagner or someone else after 1924 is unknown. From the years 1924 to 1941 the coins collectively changed hands several times including; Stephan Nagy, Wayte Raymond, Colonel E.H.R. Green, and finally Eric P. Newman and noted St. Louis coin dealer Burdette G. Johnson.



Ads placed in The Numismatist by Brown in 1919 and Wagner in 1923-24.

Johnson began disbursing four of the Liberty Head coins singly in 1943 on Newman and Johnson's behalf, and each has a well-documented history. For his part in the dealings, Newman retained the leather case; one of the Liberty Head Nickels, and two orphaned Indian Heads, including the copper example.

The history of these three Indian Head Nickels is perhaps less demonstrative than the 'Fab Five', but it is certainly interesting and historical.

INDIAN HEAD NICKELS AND PRESENTATION CASE TAKE RESIDENCE

Newman sold his 1913 Liberty Head Nickel in 1949 to dealer Abe Kosoff, leaving Newman with the two Indian Head Nickels and the leather case. Burdette G. Johnson described the three Indian Head nickels in his inventory record as follows:^{7 8}

"1913 Indian Head Pattern. The principal difference from the accepted type being that the rim around the coin on the obverse is very broad. The short feathers of the headdress is also slightly different from the regular type being broader and touching the rim of the coin. Proof and probably unique."

"1913 Indian Head. Second Type. In copper, Unc. Probably unique."

"1913 Indian Head. Regular type of the second design. Unc."

Newman has been the caretaker of the copper coin and its Type II companion for 70 years! Only occasionally removing them from the sanctity of a bank safety deposit box for a walk among friends or a researcher.⁹

Coins in leather case -

1913 Liberty head. Proof

"	"	"	"		oexcm
"	"	"	"		oexcm
"	"	"	"	750.00	oexcm
"	"	"	"	750.00	oexcm
"	"	"	Unc.	750.00	oxcml
"	Indian	"	Pattern. The principal difference from the accepted type being that the rim around the coin on the obv. is very broad. The short feathers of the head dress is also slightly different from the regular type being broader and touching the rim of the coin. Proof and quite probably unique	\$75.00	ocex
"	Indian Head. Second type. In copper				
"	Unc., probably unique			100.00	ouex
"	Indian Head. Regular type of the 2nd design. Unc.			1.00	mx

Photo © Jeff Reichenberger (5)

THE COINS

Closer study of the coins themselves reveals some interesting facts and compelling questions. The first coin is the Type I Pattern. This coin, as described by Johnson, with 'broad obverse rim' and 'short feathers...broader and touching the rim' most closely matches the description of what is now known as J-1950, from 'Pattern Coins, Experimental and Trial Pieces', by J. Hewitt Judd.¹⁰ There were 17 of these pieces struck on January 13, 1913.¹¹ Two are in the Smithsonian, six were melted, and nine are held privately.¹² It is from the first set of Indian Head trials with the date 1913.¹³ The 3 is of the flattop style and somewhat shorter than the other digits. The rim is indeed wide and the feathers and braid ties appear to touch it. The reverse is of the Bison facing left, standing on a mound. The lettering is cramped and runs together. There is no designer initial 'F' on the obverse. Both sides show highly textured fields as per the artist's original intentions.

The only other pattern candidate it could be is the J-1951. There were 4 of these struck on February 13, 1913. Two are in the Smithsonian, one went to Mint Superintendent John Landis and was subsequently melted, and one went to Treasury Secretary Franklin MacVeagh.^{14 15} However, J-1951 has a 'round top' ³, which is quite distinctive from the flat top variety eventually adopted for regular production. It is hard to imagine Johnson missing such a characteristic. In addition, the J-1951 was struck on oversized planchets in an attempt to view the design elements further from the rim,¹⁶ which it accomplished and which is in direct conflict with Johnson's remark 'feathers touching the rim'. When Johnson mentioned the 'short feathers' it is unclear exactly which feathers he is referring to. Perhaps he spoke of the tuft of feathers that resemble flower petals at the top of the head where the eagle feathers are tied together and into the hair at the part, or he may have been including the shorter of the two eagle feathers in the design. Regardless, none of them touch the rim on J-1951. But on J-1950 they are all very close to the broad, irregular rim, if not touching it when looking at magnified photos¹⁷ and certainly they would appear to be touching the rim to the naked eye. Johnson's statement 'proof and probably unique' seems to be doubtful.



Photo © Smithsonian (6)

J-1950

Note the broad rim, feathers touching the rim, and flattop 3.



Photo © Smithsonian (7)



Photo © Smithsonian (8)

J-1951

Note the feathers are distant from the rim and the 3 has a round top.



Photo © Smithsonian (9)

So barring any other documentation or further descriptions from another party, the Type I pattern that was in the leather case was probably a J-1950. The exact whereabouts of the specimen is unknown at this time.

The next Indian Head coin in the holder is what Johnson described as a “Second type. In copper Unc., probably unique” This description is accurate. Indeed, the coin is copper. Actually, it’s made of 95% copper, 2.5% zinc, and 2.5% nickel.^{18 19} It weighs 5.15 grams, which is slightly heavier than a regular nickel alloy five-cent piece. It measures 21.18mm in diameter which is approximately two one-hundredths smaller than a regular piece.²⁰ The coin is uncirculated and unique. It is a Type II coin with the Bison standing on a flat ground reverse. It is listed as J-1954 in U.S. Pattern Coins²¹, however, there is some uncertainty as to exactly what is the proper way to refer to this coin. It has been called a ‘regular issue die trial in copper’²², a ‘copper pattern’²³, a ‘trial piece’ that was issued in a presentation case,²⁴ and ‘probably produced without authorization to serve as a delicacy.’²⁵ To further stir the pot, noted author and researcher David Lange states, “No trial strikings have been reported with the Type II reverse”,²⁶ and Johnson and Newman thought the copper Indian Head might be a ‘fantasy piece’.^{27 28} So is it a pattern, a die trial, a presentation piece, or a fantasy? Each person may determine what to call it, but it is an uncirculated coin made from regular production Type II dies struck on a 95% copper planchet. Perhaps we are best served calling it an enigma in need of further study.



(10)



(11)

The third Indian Head piece is the simplest to describe, or is it? Johnson said, “Regular type of the second design, Unc.” This description opens the

door for several interpretations. I interpret it as simply a regular production strike of a Type II coin in uncirculated condition. However, other researchers discussing the Indian Head nickels in the leather case usually mention the copper piece and refer to the ‘other two’ in passing. Such as, “The other two were a Type I and a Type II”.²⁹ “...two additional Buffalo Nickels. One was a proof of a regular Type I. The second was one of the prototype coins lacking Fraser’s initial F.”³⁰ This reference suggests they were both Type I coins. Another source suggests the copper coin was housed with “an example of J-1951 and a regular 1913 Type I.”³¹ Again, this suggests they were both Type I coins.

I believe Johnson’s use of the words ‘Type’ and ‘design’ interchangeably in the descriptions of the three Indian Heads may be the root of the conflicting interpretations. For the first coin he referred to the ‘accepted type’ and the ‘regular type’, meaning the final accepted design for regular production coinage. The copper coin he referred to as the ‘second type’, meaning the Type II reverse with the flat ground. The third coin he called a ‘regular type’ of the ‘second design’. This one may be confusing, because if he meant the Type I mound reverse when he said ‘regular type’, then what did he mean by ‘second design’? If he knew of the die trials, it could be that he meant the ‘second design’ of the Type I die trials –the round top 3 variety – however, the round top three was not used for the ‘regular type’ production coins so this explanation is hard to justify. But if he meant ‘regular production coinage’ when he said ‘regular type’, then his reference to the ‘second design’ would simply mean the Type II flat ground reverse, a more plausible explanation perhaps. It must be remembered that these were Johnson’s personal notes on the coins.



(12)



(13)

This is the regular issue 1913 Type II nickel that resides in the leather case along with the unique copper specimen. It is uncirculated, displays an average strike, and displays a bit of champagne toning. Johnson valued it at \$1.00 in his inventory record in 1943.

In the final analysis, based on Johnson's original descriptions of the coins in the custom-made leather case, the three Indian Head Nickels were as follows:

- 1) Type I (mound reverse) Die Trial, now known as J-1950.
- 2) Type II (flat ground reverse) Regular Production Die strike of a copper planchet.
- 3) Type II (flat ground reverse) Regular Production Die strike on a normal nickel planchet.

INDIAN HEADS JOIN THE 'FAB FIVE'

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of the study of the Indian Head coins are the when and how questions surrounding their communing with the Liberty Heads. We are fairly certain that the 1913 Liberty Head Nickels were struck and removed from the Mint in the three-month time frame from Mid-

November 1912 to Mid-February 1913. We know that the Indian Head Type I die trial piece was struck on January 13, 1913. Of the 17 struck, 9 are in private hands.³² One of them made it's way into the leather case probably sometime in the ten-year aftermarket between 1913 and 1923.

The Type II nickel struck on a copper planchet and the regular production Type II nickel offer a more complex mystery. First of all, the Type II reverse design was still being perfected in early April 1913, and only uniface die trials of the reverse were struck on or before April 21, 1913. (These uniface strikes are the only die trials known for Type II nickels) In a letter on April 21st from Charles Barber to mint director George Roberts he states, "If you think well of the alteration we could hold up coinage for short time while I make a new hub which would not take more than ten days, when we could go on with the coinage". On April 23rd, two of the uniface trials were sent to the coin's designer, James Earle Fraser, along with Barber's letter and a letter from Roberts, in essence seeking Fraser's approval. On April 25th, Fraser wrote back his approval.³³ On May 6th Barber sent a letter to mint superintendent John Landis indicating dies were ready for production.³⁴ On May 27th Barber wrote a letter to Roberts discussing die wear comparing Type I dies to Type II dies, indicating that there had been 12 die pairs used accounting for roughly 1,300,000 coins struck so far³⁵. This tells us that regular coin production for the Type II Indian Head Nickels began somewhere in mid-May, perhaps between the 7th and the 20th, 1913.³⁶

So we know without a doubt that these two Type II nickels were struck well after the 1913 Liberty Head Nickels and perhaps the Type I Indian Head had left the mint. They would have had to have been acquired and added to the leather case sometime in the ensuing ten years.

The regular issue uncirculated Type II coin was not a problem for anyone to acquire at any time after production began, so adding that coin to the leather case was nothing unusual. But the copper piece is another story with its own set of questions. When was it struck? It could have been any time after May 7, 1913. Who did it? There is no record of any trial or experimental metal strike by any mint officials. Could the same culprits have done it as did the 'Fab Five'? It's possible, but would they risk another stunt a few months after they pulled off the first one? Why strike just one? Where did the copper planchet come from? There were no nickel sized copper die trials or patterns struck at the mint since 1883.³⁷ Was there a box or drawer containing off-metal planchets available to be used thirty years later?

I'm afraid all of the questions concerning how or when the copper Indian Head Nickel was made will probably remain unanswered.

Now let us turn to questions of the leather case. Who made the leather case (or had it custom made) with the eight nickel-sized holes in it? Was it Samuel Brown, the former mint employee, who is suspect in the whole matter? He revealed the existence of the 1913 Liberty Head nickels in 1920, but there is nothing definite about his having housed the coins in a leather case. August Wagner may have been the one to put the coins in a presentation case. It appears from his ads in the *Numismatist* in 1923-24 that his intention was to sell them as a group, and having them nicely displayed in a custom leather case would only enhance the sale. But why eight holes? Why have a case made for eight coins when you are advertising to sell five? Surely a five-hole case would be as attractive as the eight-hole variety. Why even add the Indian Heads to the mix, and not advertise them? Perhaps the Indian Heads were added to show the types of 1913 five-cent coins along side of each other?

To our knowledge there are not any other cases like this one, there is no stamp of manufacturer on it, nor the initials of an artisan. It is hand made, holding eight coins in two rows of four. The holes are larger than the coins by approximately 2mm so the coins are slightly loose within them. They are enclosed with sliding clear plastic windows on both sides, much like collector albums of today. (I submit that Wayte Raymond may have possibly had a hand in the production of the custom-made case. Colonel Green acquired the 1913 Liberty Head Nickels from Raymond in 1926 and it is believed they had an on-going business relationship.³⁸ Raymond began manufacturing and promoting the sale of coin albums with sliding plastic windows as early as 1931.³⁹ Albeit circumstantial, Raymond's boards are known to have holes slightly larger than the coins, creating a loose fit. Perhaps Green commissioned Raymond to produce the case.) The holed board is made of heavy card that is thicker than the width of the coins so the plastic slides over them easily without touching the surface of the coins. It is covered on either side with leather and hinged at the bottom so both sides can be viewed easily. The outer leather cover is shaped like a cross and lined with satin fabric. The left and right flaps fold in over the holed board. The bottom flap folds up over them and the top flap folds down and is secured to the bottom flap with a metal snap enclosure. It measures 4 5/8" by 5 5/8" when closed. The outer leather is slightly textured and a single narrow line of embossed ribbing surrounds the entire holder. Obviously, this case was made with special care.



Photo © Jeff Reichenberger (14)

CONCLUSION

Once upon a time eight 1913 nickels lived together in a cozy leather and satin abode. The five with Liberty Heads all became famous and went their separate ways. One of the Indian Heads lives anonymously with a collector who probably knows not its provenance. The others, one of nickel alloy, the other copper, have been resting in their plush home and nurtured for 70 years by renowned numismatist and all-around gentleman Eric P. Newman,

who would characterize the entire episode as a mere stepping stone to a fabulous numismatic career and simply an interesting chapter in a fulfilled life.

The 1913 Indian Head Nickels in this story have been overlooked to history, but they offer compelling questions and historical significance of their own for the numismatic community to contemplate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

This story could not have been written without the guidance, contributions and collaboration of Eric P. Newman, with whom I extend my utmost gratitude.



Photo © Jeff Reichenberger (15)

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-Much appreciation to Tom Serfass for his assistance during our visit in St. Louis.

-Sincere thanks to the authors of the wonderful references listed below.

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Eric Newman <[REDACTED]>

article update

1 message

Jeff Reichenberger <[REDACTED]>

Thu, Jul 14, 2011 at 10:06 PM

To: eric newman <[REDACTED]>

Dear Eric,

Just a note to keep you abreast on the progress of 'A Forgotten Nickel'.

I've been told by The Numismatist editors that it is still in the review process and that they are frightfully inundated with articles and reviews.

They cordially urged patience.

Hope you are having a pleasant summer, I'll keep you posted on further developments.

Sincerely yours,
Jeff



Eric Newman <[REDACTED]>

A Forgotten Nickel

1 message

Jeff Reichenberger <[REDACTED]>

Wed, Aug 31, 2011 at 7:36 PM

To: eric newman <[REDACTED]>

Dear Eric,

I just received the print copy of The Numismatist for September. The article turned out nice. Although I would have preferred a larger photo of the copper coin, my request for same was denied due to time and space constraints. But overall, I'm pleased with the result. I hope you are as well.

I will send you copies of the monograph when it is complete, perhaps mid-September. (It will have LARGE photos)

I hope you are well and busy, and thank you again for encouraging my pursuit of the forgotten nickel story.

Sincerely,
Jeff